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ABSTRACT

The Illinois community college system is comprised of 39 districts encompassing 49 campuses which served a fall 1974 enrollment of 267,156 (over 50 percent of all students enrolled in public institutions of higher education in Illinois). According to legislative dictum, Illinois community colleges must offer programs in liberal arts and sciences, general education, adult education, and vocational education. This document provides a description of the programmatic organization of the Illinois community college system in the following program areas: transfer programs, career and occupational education, and general studies. In addition, criteria for granting approval for new programs are presented, along with a definition of the concept of comprehensiveness as applied to community college programs, and a definition of the roles of various state agencies in community college program development, coordination, and approval. Finally, guidelines are presented for completing annual reviews of existing community college programs. (Author/NHM)

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PROGRAMMATIC ORGANIZATION OF THE COMMUNITY COLLEGE SYSTEM: A Report prepared by the staffs of the Illinois Board of Higher Education and the Illinois Community College Board for Master Plan--Phase IV.

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State of Illinois
Board of Higher Education

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PROGRAMMATIC ORGANIZATION OF THE COMMUNITY COLLEGE SYSTEM

The Illinois community college system has been widely recognized for its growth both in services and enrollment during the past few years. The system has developed a comprehensive program providing a wide range of post-secondary educational opportunities to the residents of the state. Although a variety of programs are being provided, there are continued requests for new programs to meet needs identified by the institutions. The institutions interact and serve the various constituencies within their districts. The institutions have accepted and utilize the criteria for new program approval. This program process requires a thorough analysis of need assessment and resource requirements at the local and state levels. Continued efforts by the state and institutional representatives have been made to improve upon program approval criteria.

With present definitions, the system and its component parts have met the test of comprehensiveness as prescribed by law. It is recognized that various degrees of comprehensiveness shall exist from one institution to another depending upon numerous internal and external factors.

Various state and local agencies impact the programs of community colleges. Open channels of communication are essential to their working to strengthen the programs in the system.

The review of existing programs is a function which must involve state agencies and local institutions in the process.

The following are four specific recommendations relative to the programmatic organization of the community college system as developed by the staffs of the Illinois Community College Board and the Illinois Board of Higher Education.

Recommendation I

Through a joint staff effort of the Illinois Board of Higher Education and the Illinois Community College Board, working with representatives of the community college system, a process should be established to assist in providing guidelines for appropriate placement and adequate numbers of programs within the state to enhance program accessibility and efficiency. Consideration should be given to the establishment of program categories that will include programs located in each district, regional programs, area programs, and ones that focus on a statewide plan.

Recommendation II

Programs should be designed and approved on the basis of educational demand, manpower needs, availability of resources, avoidance of duplication with alternative methods and the effectiveness and efficiency of the programs. Programs considered for approval should reflect the awareness of similar programs found in other sectors, private and public.

Recommendation III

The Illinois Board of Higher Education and the Illinois Community College Board staffs should identify a procedure that would assist in programmatic review within the community college system. Programs that are identified for review would require an institutional study to provide both the local institution and the state boards the necessary justification for the continuation of the programs. Factors such as low enrollment and/or disapportionately high cost should be identifying elements. Upon analysis of identified programs, recommendations should be transmitted to the local governing board suggesting an appropriate course of action regarding such programs.

Recommendation IV

The various state agencies with statutory responsibility for community college program approval or regulation should continue to improve the structure and procedures for cooperation and articulation.

Programmatic Organization

The community college system in the State of Illinois has within it 39 districts. Thirty-eight of these districts have locally elected governing boards with one district being served by a locally elected advisory board and governed by the Illinois Community College Board. Within these 39 districts, there are 49 campuses serving a fall, 1974 enrollment of 267,156. The system in 1971 began serving over 50 percent of all the students enrolled in public institutions of higher education. The majority of these are part-time students. The community colleges in 1973-74 awarded 11,369 certificates and 16,187 associate degrees.

The community colleges in the development of their programs must respond primarily to local needs and the needs of the individual students wishing to attend the institution. The college and the state in the approval process must also be cognizant of both regional and state needs particularly in the career-oriented area. The Community College Act indicates that the community college within the public system must be comprehensive. The Act describes a comprehensive community college program in Section 101-2e as:

> "a program offered by a community college which includes 1) courses in liberal arts and sciences and general education; 2) adult education courses; and 3) courses in occupational, semi-technical or technical fields leading directly to employment."

The Community College Act in Section 103-17 indicates that:

> "the Class I Community College Districts shall admit all qualified students to complete any one of their programs, including general education, transfer, occupational, technical, and terminal, as long as space for effective instruction is available. After entry the college shall counsel and distribute to students among its programs according to their interests and abilities. Students allowed entry in the college transfer program must have ability and competence similar to that possessed by students admitted to state universities in similar programs. Entry level competence to such college transfer programs may be achieved through successful completion of other preparatory courses offered by

the college. If space is not available for all students applying, the Class I Community College will accept those best qualified, using rank, class, ability, and achievement tests as guides and shall give preference to students residing in the district."

The proposed mission statement for Master Plan Phase IV states that the community colleges have six broad missions to perform. These are: 1) provide baccalaureate education programs; 2) provide career education programs; 3) provide general studies programs; 4) provide community education programs; 5) provide public service activities of an educational nature; and 6) provide student support services.

The Community College Board in cooperation with the Illinois Board of Higher Education has developed program approval procedures for new units of instruction within the community college system. This approval process includes both input and approvals from local district representatives, Illinois Community College Board representation, and the Illinois Board of Higher Education. Also included in the approval process is advisory input from the Division of Vocational and Technical Education and the Illinois Office of Education as well as agencies that license graduates of the programs of the community college system.

The Management Information System of the Illinois Community College Board provides current data on the system and the various programs being offered by the various institutions. RAMP/CC provides statistical data both for financial purposes and for the programmatic development of the system.

Baccalaureate Programs

The baccalaureate programs parallel closely the work offered by the four-year institutions during the freshman and sophomore years. The community colleges have developed transfer programs that articulate effectively with senior institutions and facilitate student transfer to four-year institutions for the completion of the last two years of the four-year baccalaureate degree. Section 102-11 provides the Illinois Community College Board with the opportunity to develop articulation procedures as stated:

"the state board in cooperation with four-year colleges is empowered to develop articulation procedures to the end that the maximum freedom

of transfer among community colleges and between community colleges and degree granting institutions be available, and consistent with the minimum admissions policies established by the Board of Higher Education."

It does not appear that there will be continued enrollment growth in baccalaureate programs. Although it is anticipated that there will be few additional disciplines added to the community college offerings, there will be cases where more courses within disciplines will be added to allow the institutions to respond to the changes in baccalaureate degree programs. These courses may take different forms as the program develops. A relatively new process has begun in the career-oriented program. These programs are referred to as capstone programs. They enable a student with an associate degree in a vocational or technical area to receive additional general education plus some specific training at the upper division level and enter the labor market with a higher degree of proficiency and a baccalaureate degree. There has been a great deal of interest on the part of senior institutions to develop programs of a capstone variety.

Career and Occupational Education

Program activity in the career and occupational education areas will continue as the demand for new employment skills continues. The Illinois Community College Board and the Illinois Board of Higher Education have coordinated this activity with the Division of Vocational and Technical Education and the Illinois Office of Education. There also continues to be a necessity to coordinate those occupations requiring licensure with the various state agencies granting licenses. Of major importance in the career areas is the availability of these educational services to the residents of the state. Although the community colleges primarily respond to local manpower needs, there is a continued need at the state level for consideration of both state and regional needs. Also, the question of program accessibility is paramount. There is always a question of how far a student can be expected to commute for a particular program within the state. This is a major issue that must be considered in the master planning process.

General Studies

The general studies programs have been developed primarily in response to local educational needs. The general studies program is divided into eight broad categories. These categories are: homemaking, improving family circumstances, personal development, development and/or review of vocational skills, intellectual and cultural, health and safety environmental studies, community and civic development, development and preparatory skills. This segment of the community college program has also been a growth area in recent years. It is anticipated that this area will continue to grow in response to community needs. This growth is particularly evident in the development and preparatory skills categories. The 1970 census showed that 2,356,569 adults over the age of 21 had less than a high school diploma in the state of Illinois. Illinois ranks the third highest state in terms of the number of people not having completed high school. Serving this population has been one of the functions of these programs. The Illinois Community College Board has also established approval criteria for programs in general studies. The general studies area has been subject to considerable discussion as attempts have been made to determine levels of responsibility on the part of the local boards and the state in financing these programs. Many of the programs in the general studies area are responding to vocational skills and programs of a remedial or developmental nature. However, in review of the other six categories, there is some indication that some of these courses can be classified in the adult education area leading to avocational interests.

The following table provides data indicating the relationships as reflected in semester hours generated in the program areas over the past three years.

PROGRAM AREA	* FY1973 NUMBER	% OF TOTAL	* FY1974 NUMBER	% OF TOTAL	** FY1975 NUMBER	% OF TOTAL
Bacc.	2,080,136	[illegible]4%	2,099,676	57.3%	2,179,455	51.0%
% Change			+0.9%		+3.8%	
Occup.	940,712	27.7%	1,075,005	29.4%	1,200,297	28.1%
% Change			+14.3%		+11.7%	
Gen. Stud.	371,207	10.9%	487,588	13.3%	890,346	20.9%
% Change			+31.4%		+82.6%	
TOTAL	3,392,055		3,662,269		4,270,088	

* Data based on Unit Cost figures which include State Community College of East St. Louis and nonreimbursable hours.

** Preliminary FY75 figures.

Four major issues are identified for discussion of programmatic organization of the community college system. The major issues identified are: Criteria for New Program Approval, The Concept of Comprehensiveness as Applied to Community College Programs, Roles of State Agencies in Community College Development, Coordination and Approval, and Annual Review of Existing Community College Programs. Based upon joint staff input from the Illinois Board of Higher Education and the Illinois Community College Board, the following discussions are presented.

Criteria for New Program Approval

The Act creating the Illinois Board of Higher Education defines in part as one of its powers and duties that ". . . the Illinois Community College Board and the campuses under their governance or supervision shall not hereafter undertake the establishment of any new unit of instruction, research or public service without the approval of the Board." With the adoption of the Illinois Community College Act in 1965, the Illinois Community College Board was also provided a responsibility to approve new units of instruction for community colleges.

The Illinois Community College Board and the Illinois Board of Higher Education have cooperatively developed program approval processes for new units of instruction for the community colleges. This process has continued to be refined and includes a number of elements that must be considered in the approval of new units of instruction. Many of the identified elements are used as criteria against which an approval recommendation to either Board is tested prior to its being recommended to the Board. Although many quantitative measures are included as elements provided by the community colleges for the submission of new programs, quantitative factors alone cannot be utilized in approving these programs.

New program approval for community colleges requires the submission of two basic ingredients. The first is a detailed program description which includes a statement of purposes of the proposed program, the nature of the program, and the estimated number of credit hours to be generated. Detailed data is submitted on the need for additional fiscal resources to operate the proposed program. Faculty needs are also provided. The second aspect of the new program approval process is detailed justification of the program, including state, regional, and local manpower needs based upon survey data.

Although much of this information has been requested in the past, continued refinement is needed to bring forward more valid data upon which decisions for recommendations and ultimate approval can be made. Consideration has been given in the past to the development of a categorization of program by type that would indicate the programs that could be expected to be found on all campuses, programs to be found on a few campuses, and programs that would be found on isolated numbers of campuses throughout the state. It is therefore recommended that the staff of the Illinois Community College Board and

the Illinois Board of Higher Education continue to cooperate with institutional representatives in the development of criteria for the program approval process. It is recommended that the staff of the Illinois Board of Higher Education and the Illinois Community College Board work with the community colleges within the system to develop three or four basic categories of programs that would assist in program placement throughout the system. These categories may consist of programs to be found in all colleges, programs with area consideration, regional programs and statewide programs.

The Concept of Comprehensiveness as Applied to Community College Programs

In Section 101-2e, the Community College Act defines a comprehensive community college program as "a program offered by a community college which includes (1) courses in liberal arts and sciences and general education; (2) adult education courses; and (3) courses in occupational, semi-technical or technical fields leading directly to employment. At least 15 percent of all courses taught must be in fields leading directly to employment, one-half of which courses to be in fields other than business education." This definition of a comprehensive community college program has been elaborated to include six basic purposes or functions in a recent statement adopted by the Illinois Community College Board and the proposed Mission and Scope statement submitted to the Board of Higher Education. These functions as previously stated are to:

1) provide baccalaureate education programs;
2) provide career education programs;
3) provide general studies programs;
4) provide community education programs;
5) provide public service activities of an educational nature;
6) provide student support services.

The statute and the elaboration provided in the Mission and Scope statement provide a clear definition of what is essential for a community college to be comprehensive. Neither statement, however, attempts to define explicit limits to comprehensiveness, leaving substantial latitude for decision-making at both the local and state level. On the other hand, neither the law nor the Mission and Scope statement implies that every college is required to or even should expand its programs to the outer limits of comprehensiveness. The

minimum standard established by the law was achieved by all community colleges when they qualified for recognition by the Illinois Community College Board. No doubt some colleges should expand the scope of their services while others may be overextended, but all colleges have met the definition of "comprehensiveness" stated in the law.

For this reason, the question of "comprehensiveness" is not a primary issue in the review of new program requests. The pertinent issues relate to the educational needs a proposed program is designed to meet, the cost of the program in view of its value and the resources available to support it, and the effectiveness and efficiency of the proposed program when compared to other methods of meeting the educational needs identified. These and similar considerations are discussed in the previous section on the criteria for program approval.

Differences in the needs and resources of individual college districts will naturally lead some campuses to develop more programs than others. The need to conserve resources may require that only a few colleges be permitted to offer certain specialized programs with limited need and enrollment potential. These factors do not diminish the comprehensive nature of a community college so long as a mix of various program types is offered. These considerations merely help assure that the public funds which support community college programs provide the greatest possible benefit for the people of the state.

Roles of State Agencies in Community College Development, Coordination and Approval

Various state agencies impact community college program development, coordination and approval. Programs are initially developed at the local institutional level but the process in a number of instances requires either approval or coordination with various state agencies. State agencies most often involved in this process are the Illinois Community College Board, the Department of Registration and Education, Division of Vocational Technical Education, Illinois Office of Education and the Illinois Board of Higher Education.

The Illinois Community College Board has primary responsibility at the state level for receiving, approving, and coordinating the new program approval process for community colleges. Prior to approving the programs, the Illinois Community College Board receives assessments

of new program requests from a number of the above mentioned agencies. Programs receiving approval by the Illinois Community College Board are transmitted to the Illinois Board of Higher Education for its consideration.

Programs involving nursing, real estate, cosmetology and barbering, must also be involved by the Department of Registration and Education prior to their becoming operational. These programs require licensure before the individual can practice; therefore, it is essential that the licensure requirements are met through the curriculum of the new program. The Department of Registration and Education's input is made prior to the program's being approved by the Illinois Community College Board.

The Division of Vocational Technical Education assists in the initial program review process for new career-oriented vocational technical programs. After the Illinois Community College Board grants approval for a particular program, the Division of Vocational Technical Education evaluates specific courses for their portion of the funding. This funding currently is made by the Division of Vocational Technical Education directly to the institutions.

The Illinois Office of Education often provides analysis of programs prior to approval by the Illinois Community College Board. This is to determine if the program as submitted meets the requirements for certification. One specific instance would be teacher aide/child care programs.

Other state agencies provide assistance to the Illinois Community College Board in the development of criteria for programs and at times review specific programs to provide additional professional expertise. A specific instance of this is the State Fire Commission that has assisted in the analysis of fire science training courses.

The Illinois Board of Higher Education provides staff assistance in the initial review process for new proposed programs submitted to the Illinois Community College Board. After the program is approved by the Illinois Community College Board, the Illinois Board of Higher Education staff does an analysis of the program as submitted and makes its final recommendation to the Illinois Board of Higher Education.

Although some of the state agencies are part of the formal approval process, others provide valuable consultative help to assist in the development of strong programs in the community college system. The effectiveness of the process depends very heavily on sound staff relations between the various agencies. Improved staff relations among the various agencies have been accomplished through work and cooperation of many staff members. Although reasonably effective relationships now exist, continuing efforts should be made to improve the structure and procedures for cooperation and articulation among the various state agencies that have statutory responsibilities for community college program approval and regulation.

Annual Review of Existing Community College Programs

The committee to study Community College Financing recommended that:

> "The Illinois Community College Board and the Illinois Board of Higher Education should develop procedures for making an annual review of existing programs and for making recommendations to local governing boards concerning limiting or eliminating instructional programs and their curricular offerings."

The purpose of this statement is to propose procedures for implementing that recommendation.

Program quality consists of many factors, some objective and some subjective. Since all of these factors should be included in an assessment of overall program quality, a comprehensive assessment of quality in community college programs is not practical at the level of the state coordinating agency. In part, this function is performed by accrediting agencies and by the administration and governing board of each institution.

A more appropriate role for state agencies is to focus initially on the quantitative aspects of individual academic programs in order to identify programs which on the basis of these criteria may appear to be inefficient or ineffective. Quantitative measures of effectiveness should not be the sole basis for making decisions about the usefulness of specific programs, but they may be extremely helpful in identifying programs which merit closer scrutiny.

The fact that a program has a high cost does not necessarily indicate that the program is ineffective or inefficient. The value of the program's output must be considered in relation to its cost. Also, the cost of alternate means of obtaining these same outputs must be considered.

From this perspective, a high cost program could be both efficient and effective if its outputs are valuable and there is no less expensive way to obtain them. Likewise, a moderate cost program could be judged inefficient and ineffective if its outputs are of lesser value and/or there are more efficient ways of obtaining them. Procedures for reviewing instructional programs in community colleges must take account of each of these considerations.

Some provision must be made to separate newly developed programs from mature programs in the process of program review. A new program should be given at least two to three years to become established before it is compared with mature programs.

The quantitative criteria used in the review of community college programs will differ somewhat from those used in baccalaureate institutions. Since many students in community colleges do not seek degrees or formal certificates, this criterion alone would be an inadequate measure of program effectiveness. For this reason, quantitative measures of program effectiveness in community colleges should focus on course enrollments and course costs. These measures may be combined with others such as degrees or certificates awarded where appropriate.

Illinois Community College Board staff and the Illinois Board of Higher Education staff should jointly develop procedures to identify courses and programs with low enrollments and/or disproportionate cost through the analysis of unit cost study data. Each community college would be informed of the courses and curricula which were so identified.

Following the identification of such courses, academic programs in which a significant number of courses had high cost and/or low enrollment would be identified. Individual colleges would be requested to perform a study of these programs using guidelines prepared by the staffs of the Illinois Community College Board and the Illinois Board of

Higher Education. In part, these guidelines would be very similar to those used in the review of new program requests. In addition, they would ask that the question of program value, program quality, and alternately, more efficient means of implementing the program being considered. While state agencies staff would be available to assist in the specific program review, the primary responsibility for conducting the study would rest with the individual institutions.

After the institutional study of an individual program is completed, the study and a report of actions completed or underway should be submitted to the Illinois Community College Board for its review. At its option, the Board could then choose to endorse the action suggested by the local Board, request further study, or make whatever other recommendations seemed appropriate to the Board.

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